

South Carolina Focuses on Instruction to Excel



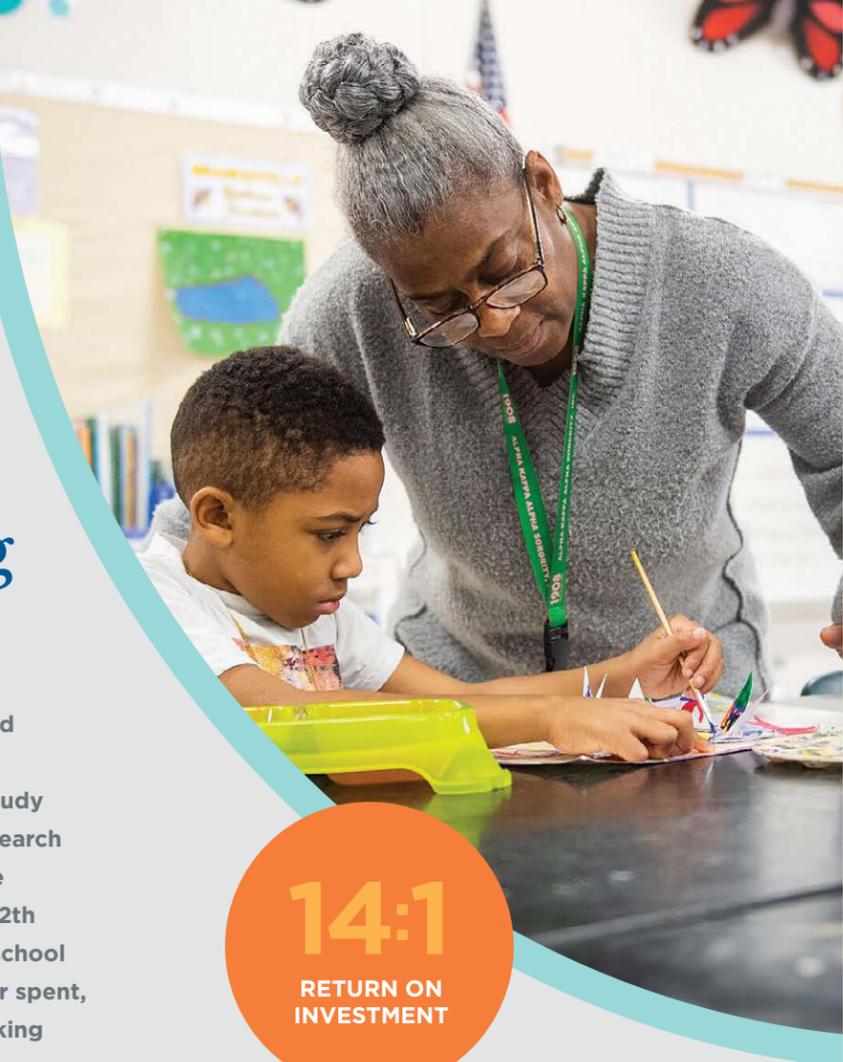
SOUTH CAROLINA school districts partner with NIET to provide educators with career pathways and opportunities for teacher collaboration and professional learning. National studies have demonstrated the impact of this work

on student outcomes, and NIET is building on these positive results in partnership with the South Carolina Department of Education by strengthening the use of state teaching and learning standards to improve observation and feedback for teachers.

South Carolina Districts Demonstrate Significant Student Learning Outcomes

Regular evaluation of results, approach, reach, and impact allows NIET to answer the most important question: “Does it have an impact?” A research study released by the National Bureau of Economic Research found substantial impact in South Carolina, where students were four times more likely to enroll in 12th grade and graduate on time after four years in a school implementing NIET’s TAP System. For every dollar spent, researchers estimated \$14 returned in value, “making TAP a very cost-effective program.”

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RETURN ON INVESTMENT



BUILDING A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

At the district level, the use of a common language around strong instruction builds consistency and clear expectations. It also supports districts in building a strong school culture of excellence. Richland One, for example, is a large, diverse district of over 21,000 students that has recently made significant gains at the high school level. The growth has been fueled by the district’s commitment to building educator capacity and supporting instruction.

The impact has been powerful. Over the last two years, C.A. Johnson High School increased achievement by 26% in English and 22% in Algebra 1, while raising its graduation rate by five points and improving College or Career Readiness by 27%. This progress moved the school up a full performance level on the state report card. Columbia High School posted similar gains, including 20% growth in Algebra 1, 38% growth in College or Career Readiness, and a two-level jump in overall state ratings. Richland One has achieved success by investing in its people and creating an environment where everyone can thrive.

“We are focused on building strong systems of support that enhance instruction and foster professional growth. Our teacher retention has steadily increased over the past three years, which speaks volumes about the strength of our collaborative and supportive environment.”

DR. SHAWN WASHINGTON
PRINCIPAL,
RICHLAND ONE



CREATING A COMMON LANGUAGE FOR STRONG INSTRUCTION

As districts look for ways to use staff and compensation more strategically to achieve better results within existing budgets, NIET’s approach is finding traction. The core, evidence-based elements of NIET’s work drive impact on student outcomes: high-quality observation and feedback, collaborative

professional learning, instructionally focused teacher leadership roles, and performance-based compensation. These effective district strategies are increasingly reflected in state policy.

For example, NIET has played a critical role in the development and implementation of the *South Carolina Teaching Standards 4.0* rubric in K-12 districts and teacher preparation programs. Building a common language and expectations around high-quality instruction across the state creates a strong foundation for educational improvement. The implementation of high-quality instructional materials is more effective when both teachers and coaches have a shared understanding of what strong instructional practices look like in classrooms.





**NIET PARTNERS
SEE POSITIVE
IMPACTS ON
STUDENT LONG-
TERM ACADEMIC
AND SOCIAL
OUTCOMES**

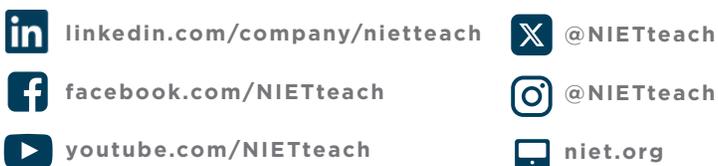
SPOTLIGHT:

Riverwalk Academy Celebrates Achievements

Riverwalk Academy in the South Carolina Public Charter School District partners with NIET to implement instructional best practices. The school's instructional leadership team provides teachers with individualized coaching and professional learning tailored to teacher and student needs. Teachers collaborate frequently to share and refine instructional strategies with a proven impact on Riverwalk Academy students.

Student achievement and teacher effectiveness have increased under the guidance of school leaders, including Elementary Principal Erica McCray, a 2025 Milken Educator Award winner. Also in 2025, Riverwalk Academy was recognized as a Silver Award recipient by the South Carolina Department of Education for its high student growth rates. Riverwalk Academy leaders and teachers remain committed to the best practices introduced by NIET, building on success and continuously finding new ways to strengthen classroom instruction.

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PARTNER SCHOOLS**

A study of South Carolina schools across multiple NIET partner districts released by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) found that the longer a student experienced NIET's best practices, the greater the benefits. Students were more likely to enroll in 12th grade and graduate high school on time, in addition to long-term social and economic benefits.